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ABSTRACT

A national survey of minority student admissions was conducted for the fifth consecutive year. In addition to previcus questions, the 14 schools with the greatest increase in new black freshmen over a 4-year period were compared with the 13 schools showing the greatest enrollment decrease on items relating tc their methods and programs. Results from 109 of 110 schools (99%) indicate that new black freshman enrollment has increased to 6% nationally in the fall of 1973, compared to 5% in 1972, 4% in 1970 and 1971, and 3% in 1969. The Middle States area (which include Maryland) has made the greatest gain since 1969 (13% versus 6%). Schools are tending to use high schoool record and standardized tests (ACT,SAT) to admit all students more than in the past few years, but less weight is being given such variables or recommendations in admitting blacks to special programs. Additionally, many fewer schools are using different admissions criteria to admit blacks to regular programs (14% in 1973, 26% in 1972, 20% in 1971, 36% in 1970 and 45% in 1969) despite evidence that the same admissions criteria are not equally fair for all students. Special programs for Native Americans and Spanish speaking students have increased while special programs for blacks have decreased in the last few years. The school most successful in enrolling blacks tended to emphasize academic programs (special or general, while the least successful schools tended to emphasize money in recruiting black students. (Author)

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A NATIONAL COMPARISON OF UNIVERSITIES SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL IN ENROLLING BLACKS OVER A FIVE YEAR PERIOD

William E. Sedlacek, Mary A. Strader
and Glenwood C. Brooks, Jr.

Research Report # 3-74

This study was sponsored and partially funded by Commission IX (Assessment for Student Development) of the American College Personnel Association.

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SUMMARY

A national survey of minority student admissions was conducted for the fifth consecutive year. In addition to previous questions, the 14 schools with the greatest increase in new black freshmen over a four year period were compared with the 13 schools showing the greatest enrollment decrease on items relating to their methods and programs. Results from 109 of 110 schools (99%) indicate that new black freshman enrollment has increased to 6% nationally in the Fall of 1973, compared to 5% in 1972, 4% in 1970 and 1971, and 3% in 1969. The Middle States area (which includes Maryland) has made the greatest gain since 1969 (13% versus 6%). Schools are tending to use high school record and standardized tests (ACT, SAT) to admit all students more than in the past few years, but less weight is being given such variables or recommendations in admitting blacks to special programs. Additionally, many fewer schools are using different admissions criteria to admit blacks to regular programs (14% in 1973, 26% in 1972, 20% in 1971, 36% in 1970 and 45% in 1969) despite evidence that the same admissions criteria are not equally fair for all students. Special programs for Native Americans and Spanish speaking students have increased while special programs for blacks have decreased in the last few years.

The schools most successful in enrolling blacks tended to emphasize academic programs (special or general), while the least successful schools tended to emphasize money in recruiting black students. The prospective minority student might be apt to say, "Look, I know I am going to have to struggle financially but I will make it somehow. Tell me what I can learn and get involved in at your school." Also schools that were able to streamline red tape and admit black students on the spot were more successful in enrolling blacks.

For the first time in the history of the survey, public universities are admitting more black freshmen than private universities (7% versus 6%). The writers feel that documenting a significant social trend such as minority admissions to large universities can help us all understand what is happening and to place the emphasis on the results of our actions rather than the intentions we might have, however good.

The Cultural Study Center at the University of Maryland in cooperation with Commission IX (Assessment for Student Development) of the American College Personnel Association has conducted a national survey of the minority admissions practices of large universities annually since the Fall of 1969. The purpose of this survey has been twofold: first the numbers of minority students entering these schools were determined and second the admissions criteria used to admit minority students were determined. Large universities were surveyed because they represent a sizeable percentage of student enrollment in American higher education and are a group of schools that has traditionally been predominantly white.

A longitudinal study has been undertaken for several additional important reasons. In higher education and in most other areas we have become overly impressed with process rather than outcome. We want to know how to do it without being much concerned with the effects of what we do. A longitudinal study such as we have outlined above allows us to sit back and focus on what we have done. Rather than to pass it off as interesting conjecture for theory classes we can look at some facts. In a second and related purpose, a longitudinal study allows us to look at trends. Trend data are a way of monitoring our system and providing documentation of social change. We should not be satisfied with a one shot study to give us an understanding of complex social and educational evolution.

Previous surveys in the series (Sedlacek and Brooks, 1970; Sedlacek, Brooks and Horowitz, 1972; Sedlacek, Brooks and Mindus, 1973; Sedlacek, Lewis and Brooks, 1974) showed that new black freshman enrollment has risen from 3% in 1969 to 5% in 1972, reflecting a steady if not dramatic increase. Gains were particularly great in the Middle States area (6% in 1969, 13% in 1972) and worst in the Western area (5% in 1969, 4% in 1972). Geographical areas are based on the regional accrediting associations reported in the higher education directory of the U.S. Office of Education (1972).

Ninety-nine percent of the universities studied used either high school grades (HSGPA) or high school rank (HSR), combined with Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or American College Test (ACT) scores in 1969. This figure had dropped to 80% in 1971 but increased to 82% in 1972. Additionally schools were employing fewer admissions predictors in 1972 than they were in past years and fewer schools were using any different predictors for black students. More special programs for Native American and Spanish speaking students existed (14% in 1972, 8% in 1971) but private universities had cut back considerably in all special programs. Since private schools have tended to set the pace regarding change in minority student education, it is all the more critical to watch future trends. American higher education has been trying to change its practices regarding minority students. What impact has been made, and how lasting it is, should be a question of concern to us all.

The purpose of the present study is to resurvey the large universities in the United States to gain further data on the questions studied above. Additionally a comparison of the most successful and least successful schools will be made. That is, the methods and programs employed by the schools showing the greatest increase in black enrollment will be compared with those showing the greatest decrease in black enrollment over four years.

Method

The admissions offices of 110 universities were sent a questionnaire concerning their minority admissions policies. The institutions sampled were large, primarily white schools throughout the United States. Schools in the major athletic conferences and large, independent institutions were included in the sample. If an individual state (including the District of Columbia) were not represented by the sampling method used, the largest school in the state was

included. The questionnaires were mailed out in November, 1973 and telephone follow-up procedures resulted in a total return of 109 questionnaires (99%). Of the 109 schools reporting, 89 (81%) were public and 20 (19%) were private.

In addition to the basic items in the questionnaire from previous years, the 10 schools which had shown the greatest increase in new black freshman enrollment were compared to the 10 schools which had shown the greatest decrease in black enrollment, regarding their recruiting practices and their most and least successful practices intended to increase minority enrollment. Due to ties for the 10th school in each criterion group, the ultimate samples employed were 14 in the high group and 13 in the low group. Four of the 14 (29%) high group schools were private and 3 of the 13 (23%) low group schools were private.

The high criterion group *increased* their new black freshman enrollment a median of +4% (using 100% as a base), while the low criterion group *decreased* their new black freshman enrollment a median of -2%. The range in percent increase for the high group (using 100% as a base) was from +16% to +3%. The range in percent decrease for the low group was from -6% to -1%. The geographical distributions of the high and low groups are shown in Table 1.

Results

1. *What is your approximate undergraduate enrollment? About how many new freshmen matriculated this fall? About how many of your newly matriculated freshmen are black?*

Table 2 shows the range of enrollment, total enrollment and black enrollment by six geographical regions for schools in the sample. The median total enrollment was 12,000 while median freshman enrollment was 2,500 and median black freshman enrollment was 100. The median percent of black freshmen was 6 percent. One school had 26% blacks and six schools had no blacks.

These results compare with previous overall enrollments but show an increase in median percent of black freshmen (3% in 1969, 4% in 1970 and 1971, and 5% in 1972).

Table 3 shows that trends in black freshman enrollment are notable by region. The Middle States region has made the greatest increase in enrolling black freshmen since 1969 but has leveled off at 13% for 1972 and 1973. Conversely, the Western region has shown great fluctuation from year to year but a recent large jump from 4% in 1972 to 9% in 1973. This is likely in part due to the small number of schools in the Western region. Other regions have shown a slight increase or stability in percent of black freshman enrollment.

2. *Briefly describe your regular admissions criteria for new freshmen.*

Table 4 shows that HSGPA, HSR and standardized tests remain as the most common admissions criteria employed by schools. Recommendations are used by 31 (28%) of the schools and extracurricular activities and interviews are used infrequently. Only 17 (16%) had open admissions, which is defined as requiring only a high school diploma or its equivalent for entry.

Generally, the figures in Table 4 agree with those from past surveys, although there were some exceptions. Recommendations, interviews and open admissions were all used with about the same frequency as in 1972. However, more schools are using HSGPA, HSR, SAT and ACT than in the past. Additionally, 94 (86%) of the schools reported using either HSGPA or HSR combined with SAT or ACT scores in 1973. This compares to 82% in 1972, 80% in 1971, 82% in 1970 and 99% in 1969. The mean number of admissions criteria employed by all schools was 2.90 in 1973, 2.77 in 1972, 3.17 in 1971, 3.32 in 1970 and 2.05 in 1969.

3. *Do you have special programs in which blacks (or mostly blacks) are enrolled? If yes, please briefly describe the criteria for admissions to the program(s).*

Table 5 shows that 55 schools (50%) had special programs in which mostly blacks were enrolled compared to 54% in 1972, 60% in 1971, 52% in 1970 and 48% in 1969. Thirteen of the 55 schools (24%) had programs for local residents only, compared to 28% in 1972, 14% in 1971 and 20% in 1970. Compared to regular admissions criteria, relatively more weight was given to recommendations and interviews and less weight to standardized tests for special programs. While this follows the general pattern of previous years, the use of recommendations among schools with special programs decreased to 24% (13/55) in 1973, compared to 43% in 1972, 23% in 1971, 38% in 1970 and 43% in 1969.

Additionally there was considerably less emphasis on HSGPA and SAT in admitting blacks to special programs in 1973 than in previous years. HSGPA was used by 11 of 55 schools (20%) in 1973, compared to 36% in 1972, 26% in 1971, 46% in 1970 and 55% in 1969. SAT was used by 7 of 55 schools (13%) in 1973, compared to 26% in 1972, 18% in 1971, 39% in 1970 and 57% in 1969.

4. *Aside from special programs, are blacks admitted under the same criteria as are all regular new freshmen?*

Fifteen (14%) of the 109 schools used different regular admissions criteria for blacks in 1973 compared to 26% in 1972, 20% in 1971, 36% in 1970 and 45% in 1969. "Different criteria of admission" was generally interpreted by admissions officers as referring to different applications or cutoff points of the same variables used in regular admissions. Private schools tended to use different admissions criteria more than public schools (17% versus 11%). This represents a great change from past years where the differential was 50% versus 20% in 1972, 52% versus 20% in 1971 and 75% versus 26% in 1970; the higher percent being private in all cases.

Results not shown in a table indicate that aside from size, public and private schools appear similar on a number of variables. In fact, for the first time in the history of the survey, public schools are enrolling a greater percentage of new black freshmen than private schools (median = 7% versus 6%). Private schools have remained at 6% since 1970, while public schools have increased from 4% to 7% new black freshmen. Other comparisons show that public and private schools had the same percentage of programs primarily for blacks and about the same percent used different criteria for black admissions. More public schools had Native Americans or Spanish speaking students in their special programs (27% in 1973, 23% in 1972) and more had programs expressly for Native Americans or Spanish speaking students (21% in 1973, 16% in 1972). Private schools showed similar trends with more schools with Native Americans or Spanish speaking students in a program (22% in 1973, 15% in 1972) and more schools with specific programs for these groups (12% in 1973, 5% in 1972).

Criterion Group Comparisons

Open ended comments made by respondents at high and low group schools were content analyzed and scoring categories developed. There were a number of significant differences between the high and low criterion group schools (χ^2-.05 level). The high group: stressed academic programs more as a recruiting theme for minorities (100% versus 54%), had more special programs for Native American and Spanish speaking students (42% versus 30%), had more special programs for black students (71% versus 61%), tended to employ 3 or more recruiters (35% versus 23%), tended to employ minorities as recruiters (63% versus 57%) and were more often able to admit minorities on the spot out in the field (43% versus 37%) than did the low group. Additionally the low group was more apt to finance minority recruiting out of regular funds (100% versus 55%), and was more likely to feel that increased money was the key to a successful recruiting program (42% versus 21%) than the high group.

As an aside, both the high group and the low group maintained their median percent increase or decrease in new black freshmen from 1972 to 1973. That is, the high group maintained its median increase at +4% from 1969 (using 100% as a base) and the low group remained at -2%.

Discussion

Overall the five years from 1969 to 1973 have seen an increase in new black freshman enrollment with the Middle States region leading the way. The 6% figure for new black freshmen reported here disagrees with the 3% figure reported by the American Council on Education (ACE) for all universities in the United States (Astin, *et al.*, 1973). The 3% figure represents a decrease from the 3.5% reported by ACE for 1972 compared to a 5% figure for the current survey reported here. A number of explanations for the discrepancy appear plausible. First, the ACE data are intended to represent all universities in the country rather than the largest ones only, as in the current survey. Secondly, the ACE data are from a sample of 37 schools which are supposed to represent all universities. The current survey is essentially a census dealing with the population of large, predominantly white universities. There is no intention in the present survey to generalize to other schools. Of the 37 schools in the ACE sample, 19 (51%) were included in the 110 from the current study. Also the ACE sample includes 53% public and 47% private schools whereas the current study has 81% public and 19% private. In short, one possible explanation for the differences is that different institutions are being described in the ACE study and the current survey.

Another potential explanation for the difference between the ACE results and the current data is the method of calculating the percentage of new black freshmen.

ACE appears to take the total number of projected new black freshmen in all universities as a percentage of the total number of projected new freshmen in all universities. In the present survey the percentage of new black freshmen at each school was calculated and the median percent across the schools determined. Thus ACE apparently has used the individual student as the unit of study, whereas we have employed the school as the unit. As an approximation to what percent would be reported in the present survey, we can look to Table 2. The total median black freshman enrollment was 100 out of the 2,500 total median for all freshmen which is 4%. Thus, using the student as the unit of study appears to give a smaller percentage of black freshmen than using the school as the unit. Using the student as the unit tends to weight the data from the large schools more heavily than using the school as the unit.

Another possible contributor to the difference in ACE results is some unexplained sampling discrepancies. On Page 86 of Astin, *et al.* (1973) Western Wyoming Community College, Wharton County Junior College in Texas, and Yuba College in California were all considered as universities in the ACE sample. If these schools were included in projected figures for universities, errors in reported figures are likely. Additionally, Astin, *et al.* (1973) indicate on page 11 that 37 universities were used in their 1973 norms, which agrees with their listing which begins on page 81, but which disagrees with the 36 universities they cite on page 7. Additionally, an advantage that a longitudinal census of a population has over a sample which varies from year to year is the elimination of errors of measurement due to sampling variability. Since the current survey has achieved more than a 97% return rate for the last four years and 90% its first year, there should be little problem with sampling variability. This, of course, does not rule out systematic errors in reporting by admissions offices,

but the source of the data is the same for both surveys. Additionally, the advantage of a longitudinal study of the same schools is that trends can be detected even if there are constant errors. In summary, there are likely many variables contributing to the discrepancies between the two surveys, but there does appear to be ample evidence that the findings of the current study are valid and worthy of serious consideration.

An important trend in the data shows that after an initial deemphasis on using standardized tests and HSGPA or HSR for selecting black students, schools are tending to rely more heavily on these criteria for all students, but less weight is being given to recommendations, HSGPA and SAT for black students in special programs, and many fewer schools are using any different criteria for admitting blacks into regular programs. This latter action runs contrary to an abundance of evidence that suggests that different admissions criteria should be employed in selecting the different race-sex subgroups of students (e.g., Thomas and Stanley, 1969; Temp, 1971; Farver, Sedlacek and Brooks, 1974; Pfeifer and Sedlacek, 1974). Sedlacek and Brooks (1974) provide considerable evidence that the experiences of black females, black males, white females and white males are sufficiently different in our society to preclude the possibility that we could be equally fair to all groups by using any single set of admissions criteria. Equality means using the most *appropriate* criteria for each group, rather than the *same* criteria.

The decrease in special programs for blacks for the last few years and the growth of special programs for Native Americans and Spanish speaking students have been notable trends. An emphasis on academic programs, be they special or general, seems to be the principal difference between the schools which have increased their minority enrollments and those who have not. The least successful

schools have tended to feel that increased money was the answer to increased enrollment. Thus, a recruiting emphasis on what a student will be studying rather than on the money available appears to work better, even with students who may be badly in need of money. Money can be overstressed to the point where it looks like the school is trying to "buy" the student, which may subtly appear to be a modern version of slavery. Thus, the prospective minority student might be saying "Look, I know I am going to have to struggle financially but I will make it somehow. Tell me what I can learn and get involved in at your school." Evidence from other studies suggests that minority students who take that approach are the best students, most likely to remain in school (Gurin, *et.al.*, 1969; DiCesare, Sedlacek and Brooks, 1972; Bayer, 1973; Strader, Brooks and Sedlacek, 1974). It is possible that the low group of schools was more concerned with money because they were financing their minority programs out of regularly budgeted funds whereas the high group schools more often had some outside funding. An analysis of the schools in the high and low groups does not suggest any particularly relevant differences in characteristics suggesting "have" versus "have not" schools. The high group schools appear to have more active minority programs in most ways and were likely more aggressive in pursuing outside funding.

Another interesting difference among the high and low group schools (43% versus 37%) was the ability to admit minorities on the spot, out in the field. By having poorly coordinated admissions and financial aid programs, delayed by red tape and multiple forms, minority students have been lost to schools. Many minority students are used to a more random reinforcement system in their lives than is typical of the white student. They have grown up in an atmosphere where the people who try hardest don't always get ahead due to the inequities in the system (Sedlacek and Brooks, 1974). Thus, many minority students will be less apt to trust or understand a long lag between application and acceptance.

Schools that are able to streamline their admissions procedures for minority students are likely to improve their recruiting.

In summary, it appears that progress is being made by the large universities in their minority enrollments, but less change is evident in the admissions criteria they use. There appear to be identifiable differences between schools with successful minority student programs and those which are not successful. The writers feel that documenting a significant social trend such as minority admissions to large universities can help us all understand what is happening, and to place the emphasis on the results of our actions rather than the intentions we might have, however good.

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TABLE 1

Frequency of the High and Low Criterion Group Schools by Region

Region	High Group	Low Group
North Central	4	2
Southern	3	4
Middle States	6	3
Northwest	1	3
New England	0	0
Western	0	1
Total	14	13

TABLE 2

Range and Frequency of Enrollments for 109 Schools by Geographical Location (Question 1)

Schools by Region	*N*	Range of Total Enroll.	Median Total Enroll.	Median Fresh. Enroll.	Median Black Fresh. Enroll.	Median Percent of Black Fresh. Enroll.
North Central	38	3,600-40,500	15,124	2,795	103	5
Southern	26	2,500-40,611	11,823	2,498	91	5
Middle States	22	2,000-42,025	8,522	2,850	225	13
Northwest	12	1,725-26,715	7,402	1,974	26	2
New England	6	7,300-18,300	8,250	2,030	22	3
Western	5	6,400-19,966	17,500	3,000	215	9
Totals	109	1,725-42,025	12,000	2,500	100	6

TABLE 3

Median Percent of Black Freshman Enrollment by Region
1969-1973

	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973
North Central	3	3	3	5	5
Southern	2	3	3	4	5
Middle States	6	8	8	13	13
Northwest	1	1	1	2	2
New England	1	2	2.5	2	3
Western	5	8	6	4	9
Median Totals	3%	4%	4%	5%	6%

TABLE 4

Frequencies of Admissions Criteria Used by 109 Schools (Question 2)

Schools by Region	N	ADMISSIONS CRITERIA												
		Open Admissions	High School GPA	High School Rank	SAT	ACT	CEEB Ach. Tests	State/ Local Tests	Extra-curr. Activities	Recommendations	Interview	Predicted GPA	Preference to Local Res.	Preference to Alumni/ Family
North Central	38	8	15	26	19	24	2	2	1	6	2	0	0	0
Southern	26	1	12	12	19	9	1	2	2	8	3	2	1	1
Middle States	22	3	12	12	11	7	3	0	5	9	5	2	1	0
Northwest	12	5	9	4	5	9	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
New England	6	0	5	5	8	1	1	0	2	4	0	0	0	0
Western	5	0	4	3	4	3	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	0
Totals	109	17	57	62	66	52	8	4	11	31	10	5	2	1

TABLE 5

Frequencies of Admissions Criteria Used by 109 Schools to Select Black Students to Special Programs (Question 3)

Schools by Region	N	ADMISSIONS CRITERIA										
		Spec. Programs N	Spec. Prog. Local Res. Only	High School GPA	High School Rank	SAT	ACT	CEEB Ach. Tests	State or Local Tests	Extra-curr. Activities	Recommendations	Interview
North Central	38	18	3	5	5	2	4	0	0	0	2	1
Southern	26	12	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0
Middle States	22	12	8	4	3	2	1	0	0	0	6	4
Northwest	12	6	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
New England	6	4	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	2
Western	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	109	55	13	11	12	7	5	0	0	0	13	7